The Octave of Jealousy

BY STACY AUMONIER.

Singular Coincidences Are to Be Observed in the Strata of Society.



THE TRAMP WATCHED HIM ENTER A COTTAGE AND HE HEARD A WOMAN'S VOICE.

A TRAMP came through a cutting by old Jerry Shindle's nursery and, crossing the stile, stepped into the glare of the white road. He carried an ash stick, and the rest of his worldly belongings in a spotted red and white handkerchief. He was hungry and he eyed, critically, the potential possibilities of a cottage standing back from the road. It was a shabby little three-roomed affair, with fowls running in and out of the front door, some washing on a line, and the sound of a child crying within. While he was hesitating a farm laborer came through a gate to an adjoining field and walked toward the cottage. One hand balanced a steel fork across his shoulder. As he came up the tramp said:

"Where does this road lead to, mate?"

The laborer replied brusquely:

"Pondhurst."

"How far?"

"Three and a half miles."

He walked stolidly across the road and entered the garden of the cottage. The tramp watched him enter the cottage, and he heard a woman's voice. He sighed and muttered into his stubby red beard: "Lucky devil!" Then, hunching his shoulders, he set out down the white road.

Having kicked some mud off his boots, the laborer, Martin Crosby, said to his wife:

"Dinner ready?"

She answered petulantly:

"No, it isn't. You'll have to wait another 10 minutes, the 'taters aren't cooked. I've enough to do this morning, I can tell yer, what 'with this washing, and Lizzie screaming with her teeth, and the biler going wrong."

"Ugh! There's allus somethin'."

Martin went out into the garden and lighted his pipe. The fowls clucked round his feet and he kicked them away. He, too, was hungry. However, there would be food of a sort—in time. When you work in the open air all day you can eat anything. The sun was pleasant on his face, the shag pungent and comforting. If only old Emma weren't such a muddler! A good enough piece of goods when at her best, but no management. Lizzie—7 months old and two teeth through already. A lovely child, the image of—what her mother must have been. Life wasn't so bad—really.

The gate clicked and the tall figure of Ambrose Baines appeared. Tucked under his arm was a gun, with its two barrels pointing at the ground. He was the gamekeeper to Sir Septimus Letter. He called out:

"Mornin', Martin."

Martin replied: "Mornin'."

"I was just passin'. The missus says you can have a cookin' or so of runner beans if you wants 'em. We've got more than enough, and I hear as yours is blighty."

"Oh! . . . ay, than'ee."

"Middlin' hot today."

"Ay . . . terrible hot"

"When'll you be comin'?"

"I'll stroll over now. There's nowt to do. I'm waitin' dinner. I 'specks it'll be a half hour or so."

He went inside, fetched a basket and rejoined Baines in the road. They strolled through the cutting and got into the back of the gamekeeper's garden. Martin went along the row and filled his basket. Baines left him and went into his cottage. He could hear Mrs. Baines singing and washing up.

Of course, they had their dinner. Mrs. Baines was a marvel. On one or two occasions Martin had entered their cottage. Everything was spick-and-span and done on time. The two children always seemed to be clean and quiet. Mrs. Baines could cook, and she led the hymns at church—so they said. Even the garden was neat and trim and fruitful. Mrs. Baines appeared at the door and called out:

"Mornin', Mr. Crosby."

He replied gruffly: "Mornin', Mrs. Baines."

"Middlin' hot."

"Ay . . . terrible hot."

She was not what you would call a pretty woman, but she was natty, competent, irrepressibly cheerful. She would make a shilling go as far as Emma would a pound. The cottage had five rooms, all in a good state of repair. Baines paid no rent; Martin had to pay 5 shillings a week, and then the roof leaked, and the boiler never worked properly—but perhaps that was Emm's fault. He heard the two children laughing and Baines' voice joining in.

"Some people do have luck," Martin murmured, and went back to his wife.

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Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water;
Jack fell down and broke his crown
And Jill came tumbling after!

IT was very pretty—the way Winny Baines sang that, balancing the smaller boy on her knee and jerking him skyward on the last word. She was pretty enough to Ambrose, with her clear skin, kind, motherly eyes and thin brown hair.

"She's too good for me," Ambrose would think at odd moments. "She didn't ought to be a gamekeeper's wife."

She was a wonderful woman. She managed so well; she never complained. Of course, so far as the material necessities were concerned, there was enough and to spare, and yet—he would have liked to have made things better for Winny. There never seemed a chance to save, and soon there would be the boys' schooling.

At dawn he would wander through the coppices, drenched in dew, the gun under his arm and the dog close to heel. Life would be good then, and yet somehow—it was not Winny's life. Only through their children did they seem to know each other.

"Oo—Ambrose," the other boy was tugging at his beard, when Winny spoke. He pretended to scream with pain before he turned to his wife.

"Yes, my dear?"

"Will you be passing Mr. Meads' shop? We have run out of candles."

"Oh? Roight be, my love. I'll be nigh there afore sundown. I have to order seed from Crumblings."

At Mr. Meads' shop he had to wait while several women were being served.

Mrs. Meads came in through a parlor at the back. She was going to a welfare meeting at the vicar's. She said:

"Good evening, Mr. Baines, hope you are all nicely."

The parlor door was open, and Ambrose could see a maid in a cap and apron clearing away tea things in the gayly furnished room. The Meads had a servant! He knew that Meade was extending his business. He had a cheap clothing department now, and he was building a shed out at the back to supply petrol to motorists, but—a servant!

He picked up his packet of candles and muttered gruffly:

"Good evenin'."

As he swung down the village street, he muttered to himself:

"Gad! I wish I had his money!"

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WHEN Mrs. Meads returned from the welfare meeting at half-past 8, she found Meads waiting for her in the parlor, and the supper laid. There were cold veal and beetroot, apple pie, cheese and stout.

"I'm sorry I'm late, dear," she said.

"That's all right, my love," replied Mr. Meads, not looking up from his newspaper.

"We had a lovely meeting—Mrs. Wonnicott was there, and Mrs. Beal, and Mrs. Edwin Pillcreak, and Mrs. James, and Ada, and both the Jamiesons, and the vicar made two lovely speeches."

"Oh, that was nice," said Mr. Meads, trying to read.

"I should think you'd want your supper."

"I'm ready when you are, my love."

Mr. Meads drew his chair up to the table and carved rapidly. Then he rang a little tinkly hand-bell and the new maid appeared.

"Go into the shop, my dear," he said, "and get me a pot of pickled walnuts."

The maid went, and Mrs. Meads clucked:

"Um—being a bit extravagant to-night, John."

"The laborer is worthy of his hire," quoted Mr. Meads sententiously. "Besides we had a good day today—done a lot of business. Pass the stout——"

"I'm glad to hear it," replied Mrs. Meade. "It's about time things began to improve. Mrs. Wonnicott was wearin' her biscuit-colored taffeta. She looked smart. Oh, and Mrs. Mounthead was there, too! No end of a swell she looked."

Mr. Meads' eyes lighted with a definite interest. Mrs. Mounthead was the wife of James Mounthead, the proprietor of that handsome hostelry, "The Die Is Cast." When his long day's work was over Mr. Meads would not infrequently pop into "The Die Is Cast." He swallowed half a glass of stout at a gulp.

"Oh, so she's got into it, too, has she?" he said.

"Yes, she's really quite pleasant. She told me that her husband has just bought Bolder's farm over at Pondhurst. He's setting up his son there who's marrying Kate Steyning. By the way, we haven't heard from Charlie for nearly three weeks."

Mr. Meads sighed. Everybody in the neighborhood knew that their son Charlie was up in London, and not doing himself or anybody else any good. And Edie must need talk about old Mounthead's son—a promising, industrious fellow. Oh! and so James had bought him Bolder's farm, had he? Just bought it in the way that he, Sam Meads, might buy a gramophone, or an umbrella. Psaugh!

"I don't want no tart," he said, on observing Edie begin to carve it.

"No tart!" she exclaimed. "Why, what's wrong?"

"Oh, I don't konw," he replied. "Working too hard. I'll go out for a stroll after supper."

An hour later he was leaning against the bar of "The Die Is Cast," drinking gin and water, and listening to Mr. Mounthead's discourse on dogs. Other cronies drifted in. They were all friends of both Mr. Meads and Mr. Mounthead. Mrs. Mounthead seldom appeared in the bar, but there was a potinan and a barmaid; and somewhere in the rear a cook, two housemaids, a scullerymaid, a boy for knives and boots, and a hostler. Mr. Mounthead also had his own farm well stocked with pigs, cattle, and poultry. While taking his guests' money in a sleepy, leisurely way, he dropped casually that he was engaging an overseer at 400 a year to take his son's place.

"He doesn't know what work is, either," suddenly occurred to Mr. Meads. Mr. Mounthead only served in the shop as a kind of social relaxation. If he, Sam Meads, didn't serve in his shop himself all day from early morning till late evening, goodness knows what would happen to the business. Besides—the pettiness of it all! People running up little accounts it was always hard to collect. But here—oh, the snappy quick profit. Everybody paying on the nail, served in a second, and what a profit! Walking home, a little dejectedly, he struck the road with his stick and muttered:

"Drat that man!"

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MRS. JAMES MOUNTHEAD leaned back luxuriously in the easy chair and yawned. James came puffily up the stairs and opened the door.

"A nightcap, Queenie?" he wheezed.

Mrs. Mounthead smiled brightly. "I think I will tonight, Jim."

He went to a cabinet and poured out two mixed drinks. He handed his wife one and, raising the other to his lips, said:

"Well, here's to the boy!"

"Here's to James the Second!" she replied, and drank deeply. Her eyes sparkled. A little drink easily affected Mrs. Mounthead. She became garrulous.

"I had a good time at the Welfare, though some of the old cats didn't like me, I know. Ha, ha, ha; what do I care? We could buy the whole lot up if we wanted to, except perhaps the Wonnicotts. You should have seen old Mrs. Meads! Looked like a washerwoman on a Sunday. The vicar called me madam and said he 'oped I often come. I gave a fiver to the fund. Ha, ha, ha; I didn't tell 'em that I made it backing Ringcross for the Nunhead stakes yesterday! They'd have died."

During this verbal explosior. James Mounthead thought to himself: "Um. It's a pity Queenie gives herself away sometimes." He wanted to talk about their success, but he didn't want to boast about wealth in quite that way. His father had been a small landed proprietor and a stock breeder—a man of stern, unrelenting principles. From his father he, James Mounthead, had inherited a kind of reverence for the ordered development of land and cattle, an innate respect for the sanctity of tradition, caste, property and fair dealing. His wife was the daughter of a publican at Pondhurst. As a girl she had served in the bar. When she had a little to drink she was apt to display her worst side, James sighed.

"Did Mrs. Wonnicott say anything about her husband?" he asked, to change the subject.

"You bet she did. Tried to put it across us—when I told her about us buying Bolder's farm—said her old man had thought of bidding for it, but Sturge had neglected the place too long. I said: 'Yes, and p'raps it wouldn't be convenient to pay for it just now, after 'aving bought a lawn mower!' Ha, ha, ha.' He, he, he. Oh, my!"

"I shouldn't have said that," mumbled Mr. Mounthead. "Come on, let's go and turn in, old girl."

An hour later James Mounthead was tossing restlessly between the sheets. Queenie, of course, had given herself away again to Mrs. Wonnicott. He had probably as much money as Lewis Wonnicott, if not more, but there the matter stopped. Wonnicott was a gentleman; his wife a lady. Wonnicott led the kind of life he would like to live—a gentleman farmer, with some sound vested interests; a man with a great knowledge of land, horses, finance and politics.

James loved Queenie in a queer, enduring kind of way, but he knew that he could never attain the goal of his vague ambitions, with her clinging to his heels. He thought of Lewis Wonnicott, and his heart became bitter with envy.

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"I DON'T think I shall attend those welfare meeting any more," remarked Mrs. Lewis Wonnicott at the breakfast table. "They are getting such awful people in. That dreadful woman, the wife of Mounthead, the publican, has joined."

"Old Mounthead's all right—not a bad sort. He knows a gelding from a blood mare."

"That may be, but his wife is the limit. An awful vulgar person, boasts about the money her husband makes out of selling whisky."

"By gad! I bet he does, too. I wouldn't mind having a bit in his pub. Do you see Canadian Pacifics are still stagnant?"

"Lewis, you think about nothing but money!"

"Oh, come, my dear, I'm interested in a crowd of other things—things which I don't make money out of, too."

"For instance?"

"The land, the people who work on it, horses, cattle, game, the best way to do things for everybody. Besides, ain't I interested in the children? The two girls at Bedales? Young Ralph at Rugby?"

"I think you might bestir yourself to get among better people. The girls will be leaving school soon and coming home. You spend all your time among horse breeders and cattle dealers and people like Mounthead, and occasionally call on the vicar, but who is there of any importance that we know?"

"Gad! What do you want? Do you want me to go and call at Crawshay Park and ask Sir Septimus and Lady Letter to come and make up a four at bridge?"

"Don't be absurd! You know quite well that the Letters are entirely inaccessible. He's not only an M. P. and owner of half the newspapers in the country, but a millionaire. But we don't even know the county."

"Who, for instance?"

"Well, the Burnabys. You met St. John Burnaby at the Constitutional Club two or three times. They're very nice people and neighbors. And they have three boys all in the twenties, and the girl Sheila—she's just a year younger than Ralph."

"Women are wonderful," muttered Lewis Wonnicott, without raising his head. Mrs. Wonnicott swept to the door. With her hand on the door handle, she said acidly:

"If you can spare half an hour from your grooms and pigs, I think you might at least do this to please me—call on Mrs. Burnaby today."

And she shut the door crisply.

"Oh, Jiminy-Piminy!" muttered Mr. Wonnicott. "Jiminy-Piminy!"

He stood up, and walked through the French window, down the steps to the sunk rose-garden.

Once among the rosebushes he lighted his pipe. (His wife objected to smoking in the house.) Half buried among elms he could just see the five red gables of the Burnabys' capacious mansion.

"I can't do it," he thought. "I can't do it, and I shall have to do it."

He had been introduced to St. John Burnaby and had spoken to him once or twice. Burnaby had never given any evidence of wishing to follow up the acquaintanceship. Bit of a swell, Burnaby, connected with all sorts of people. Some said he had political ambitions, and meant to try for Parliament at the next election. He had a son in the diplomatic service, a daughter married to a bishop. Over at the Five Gables they kept nine gardeners and 20 odd servants. Everything was done tip-top.

Lewis Wonnicott turned and regarded his one old man gardener, trying the new mower. Poor Dorothy! Of course she did think of the children—no getting away from it. He hadn't accomplished all he ought to. Jiminy-Piminy! It would be a squeeze to send Ralph up to Cambridge next year!

He looked across the valley at the five red gables among the elms, and sighed.

"Lucky devil!" he murmured. "Blast it all! I suppose I must go."

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"YOU don't seem to realize the importance of it," said Gwendolen St. John Burnaby to her husband as they sat on the terrace. "There's Lal, wasting his talents at that wretched little embassy at Oporto, and all you've got to do is to drive three miles to Crawshay Park and put the matter before Sir Septimus."

"These things always seem so simple to women," answered Sir John, a little peevishly.

"Well, do you deny that he has the power?"

"Of course he has power, my dear, but you may not realize the kind of life a man like that lives. He deals in movements in which men are only pawns. If I told him about Lal he would make a note of it, and forget about it directly I turned my back."

Mrs. St. John Burnaby stamped her elegant Louis heels.

"Is nothing ever worth trying?"

"Don't be foolish, Gwen, haven't I tried? Letter knows I've backed his party for all I'm worth. When I get elected will be the moment. I shall then have a tiny atom of power. For a man without even a vote in Parliament do you think Letter is going to waste his time?"

"Obstinate!" muttered Mrs. Burnaby. The little lines round the eyes and mouth of a face that had once been beautiful became accentuated in the clear sunlight. She knew that her husband was ambitious, but there was always just that little something he lacked, just that little special effort that might have landed him among the gods—or in the House of Lords. He had made money—a hundred thousand or so—but he had not even attained a seat in Parliament. His heavy, dark face betokened power and courage, but not vision.

At the approach of a butler followed by a gentleman in a check suit and a white stock, Mrs. St. John Burnaby raised her lorgnette.

"One of these local people," she reflected.

On being announced the gentleman in the check suit exclaimed rapidly:

"Excuse the liberty I take—neighbors, don't you know. Remember me at the Constitutional, Mr. Burnaby? Thought I would drop in and pay my respects."

St. John Burnaby nodded.

"Oh, yes, yes, quite. I remember, Mr.—er—Mr.——"

"Wonnicott."

"Oh, yes, of course. How do you do? My wife—Mr. Wonnicott."

The wife and the Wonnicott bowed to each other. Mr. Wonnicott managed to say:

"We live over at Wimpstone, just across the valley—my wife, the girls are at school, boy's up at Rugby."

"Oh yes—really?" This was Mrs. Burnaby, who was thinking to herself:

"The man looks like a dog fancier."

"Very good school," said St. John Burnaby. "Hot today, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's exceedingly warm."

"Do you golf?"

"No. I don't golf. I ride a bit."

"You must excuse me," said St. John Burnaby, "I have got to get a trunk call to London."

She fluttered into the house. St. John Burnaby was preoccupied and monosyllabic and the visitor was relieved to make his escape. Walking down the drive, he thought:

"It's no good. He dislikes me."

But St. John Burnaby was only thinking of Sir Septimus Letter, the big man he would have liked to be. He ground his teeth and clenched his fists:

"I will not appeal for young Lal," he muttered. "Let him fight his own battles."

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SIR SEPTIMUS LETTER stood in his cool library and conversed with his private secretary. Sir Septimus was wearing what appeared to be a ready-made navy serge suit and a low collar. His sallow face was heavily marked; the strangely restless eyes peered searchingly beneath dark brows. The face had power, but of the kind which has been mellowed by the friction of every human experience. It had alert intelligence, a penetrating absorption, above all things, it indicated vision. The speech and the movements were incisive; the wiry body a compact tissue of nervous energy.

The secretary was saying:

"The third reading of the nationalization of paper industries bill comes on at 5:30, sir. Boneham will be up, and I do not think you will be called till 7. You will, however, wish to hear what he has to say."

"I know what he'll say. You can cut that out, Roberts. Get Libby to give me a precis at 6:45."

"Very good, sir. Then there will be time after the Associated News Service board at 4 to see the minister with regard to this question of packing meetings in East Riding. Lord Lampreys has some information."

"Right. What line are Jennins and Castwell taking over this?"

"They're trying to side-track the issue. They have every unassociated newspaper in the north against you."

"H'm, h'm! Well, we've fought them before."

"Yes, sir. The pressure is going to be greater this time."

The great man's eyes sparkled. "Roberts, get through on the private wire to—Lamb; no, get through to all of them, and make it quite clear. This is not to be a party question—liberty of the subject and so on."

"Very good, sir. The car comes at 1:15. You are lunching with Cranmer at Shorn Towers; the Canadian paper interests will be strongly represented there. I will be at Whitehall Court at 3 with the dispatches. It would be advisable, if possible, to get Loeb of the finance committee. Oh, by the way, sir, I had to advise you from Loeb. They have received a cable report of the expert's opinion from Labrador. There are two distinct seams of coal on that land you bought in '07. A syndicate from Buffalo offer a million and a quarter dollars down."

"What did we pay?"

"One hundred and twenty thousand."

"Don't sell."

"Very good, sir."

"Have you seen my wife, lately?"

"I have not seen Lady Letter for some days, sir. I believe she is at Harrogate."

The great man sighed, and drew out a cigarette case, opened it and offered one to Roberts, who accepted it with an elegant gesture. Then he snapped it to, and replaced it in his pocket.

"Darn it, Roberts, Reeves says I mustn't smoke."

"Oh, dear!—only a temporary disability I trust, sir."

"Everything is temporary, Roberts."

He walked abstractedly out of the room. A little clock in the outer corridor indicated 20 minutes to 1. The car was due at 1:15. Thirty-five minutes—oh, to escape for only that brief period! Through the glass doors he could see his sister, talking to two men. He turned sharply, and went through a corridor leading out to the rear of the garage. He passed through shrubbery, and came to a clearing, walked across it and got among some trees. The trees of Crawshay Park—his trees! . . . He looked up at the towering oaks and elms.

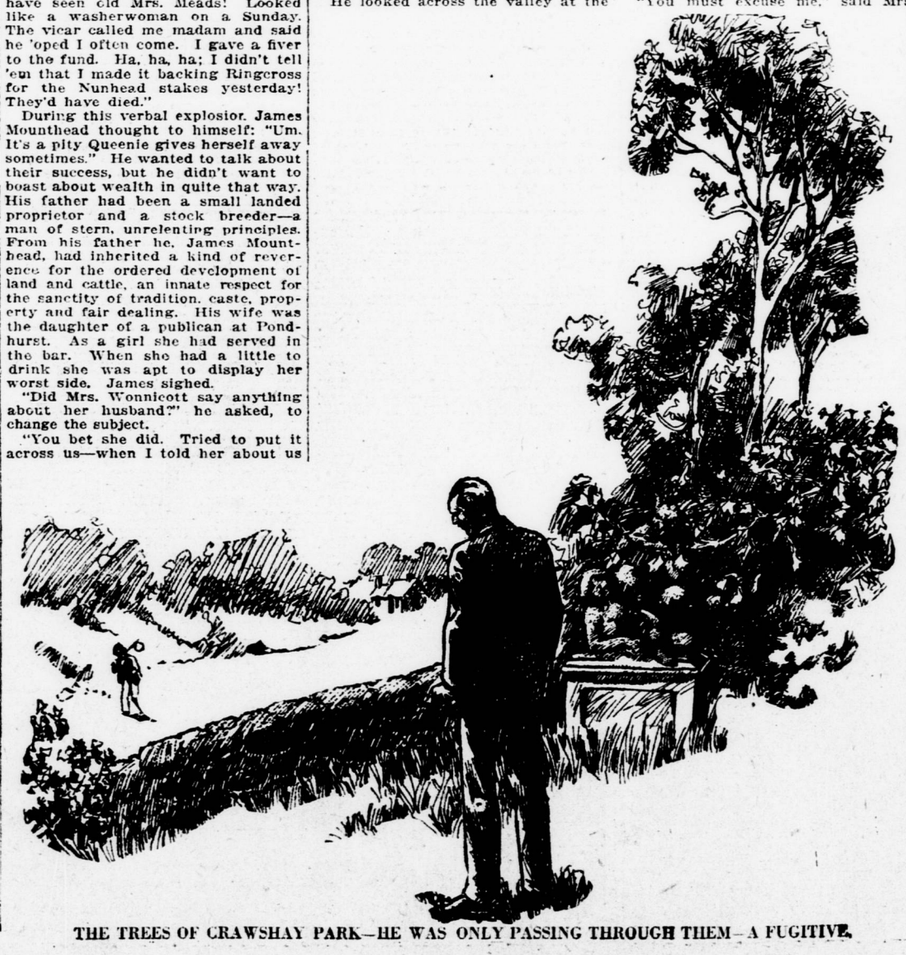
They were there years before he was born. They would be there years after his death. He was only passing through them—a fugitive. "Everything is temporary, Roberts." Yes—even life itself. Jennins and Castwell! Of course they wanted to get him down. Does one get to the top without making enemies? The park sloped down to a low stone wall, with an opening where one could obtain a glorious view across the weald of Sussex.

As he stood there he saw a tramp clamber down a bank and stand hesitating in the middle of the road. In his hand he carried a red handkerchief containing his worldly belongings.

Sir Septimus observed him hesitate, look up at the sky and set out with long, swinging strides down the white road. There stirred within the breast of the millionaire a curious, wistful longing. Oh, to be free! To be free! To walk across those hills without a care, without a responsibility. With a groan Sir Septimus Letter murmured:

"Lucky devil! Lucky devil! O God! If I could die."

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THE TREES OF CRAWSHAY PARK—HE WAS ONLY PASSING THROUGH THEM—A FUGITIVE.

COLUMBUS "SURE" DESERVED BIG SUCCESS

Nina Wilcox Putnam Declares the Way That Man Was Advt. She Bets He Could of Been President of the U. S. A. if He Wanted the Office.

EVER since the days when Mr. & Mrs. Columbus used to quarrel over whether little Chris would grow up to be Chief Inquisitor or merely go into Uncle Tony's Spaghetti Factory, one of the most pop indoor sports known to parents has been deciding what their kid will be when it grows up, and I and George, that's my husband, ain't without this particular home grown human weakness.

We was going at it good and strong the other afternoon while getting ready for that Joe Bush of the Hawthorne Club and his wife to drop in on us. It being Columbus day, why I suppose the Joe Bushes got those Restless Holiday Blues and decided to run over and call, and we having nothing to do with ourselves, why we was permitting it.

But not without due precautions, as Geo had received from a friend in Havana, Texas, a big box of cigars and in a thoughtless moment he had bragged to Joe about them cigars, with the net result Joe was trying to smoke up the net cigars. That Joe Bush certainly has taking ways!

Well anyways, Geo. says by cracky I ain't going to have him stacking himself up like a cartridge belt with them smokes this time, he says, I believe I will stick them into the pianola.

And I says for heaven's sake no, if you do, that will be the first thing Joe'll open, put them in the bottom of the waste barket until he's gone, nobody will find 'em there.

And George put them there, and as he done so he run into something Junior had been building on the floor out of a vacant shoe box, two bricks, a pair of old shoe trees and a empty alarm clock. You know the cute way kids will make playthings out of trash and trash out of playthings.

Geo. pretty near broke his neck over it, but instead of getting sore, why he merely says lookit what that boy of mine has been up to, will you, that kid is smart if I do say so, say Jennie, I think that boy of mine is going to be a engineer, he says.

And I says, yeh, I notice when he does anything smart he is your son, but leave him do something bad and you will commence yelling hey Jennie look it what that kid of yours has been doing again.

As for him being a engineer I says that is all nonsense, I says, because he's going to be principal of a high school, I says, I got it all planned out.

Anyways, that boy's got genius, says George.

Well, I says, I noticed his tongue was a little coated this morning, but I hope he ain't got anything as bad as that.

And George says I dunno, he says, sometimes I think he's going to be President, and then again I think he's going to be hung. But he ain't an ordinary boy, I can tell you that right now.

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WELL, for once I and George agreed perfectly on something. One day Junior would certainly be great, and realizing this got me to wondering how it would feel to be the mother of a famous man, such, for a sample, as Christopher Columbus.

Of course I realized where it was a awful responsibility to have that kind of a son. Poor Mrs. Col., what a worry Chris must have been to her! Probably the family and friends didn't half appreciate him at first, neither. I hear where his folks come from a small town, and out there it is more then likely the neighbors talked a lot about him to the effect aw the big bum, lookit the way he is always running off to discover foreign countries, why don't he stay home and do some real work, and such et certeras, as Hot Bozo! does he think he'll ever get away with a new real estate development way out there in America, why nobody'll ever go way off there to live.

Probably even his personal appearance got cooked over, with remarks such as the poor sap what's he want to go bob his hair like that for, he'd look a whole lot better with a boyish bob then with the kind he's got. And that kind of apple sauce, see?

Well, I'll bet his Ma believed in him anayways in spite of him doing such a lot of crazy things like trying to make his three minute egg stand on end at breakfast. I don't remember did he try to make that famous egg stand on end with the shell on or off, but I know he made a flop of it, and that decided him the world was round.

Another thing probably worried poor old Mrs. Columbus a lot was that Spanish woman, Isabella.

Queen or no queen, I bet the old lady didn't like the way Chris stuck around, hocking her jewels and everything. It didn't look good, and how could the old lady guess the price of N. Y. real estate was going to justify it some day? It takes a terrible broad minded mother to raise a great man without worrying but luckily it only takes a mother to believe in one.

I dunno, too, but it does seem to me that what with the tunny way Columbus dressed, in that art student hat, ladies bathing suit, bedroom slippers and bobbed hair, well, it's no real wonder the King of Spain thought he was a Greenwich Village nut and turned him down.

His frau, Queen Isabella, more then likely stuck to Chris just for cussedness, you know how some wives are; they get a bunch of friends that stick around the house a lot generally eating quite a few free meals, and when the wife can't think of any other way to excuse them to her husband, why she calls 'em highbrow. Only in Bella's case, she was right about Chris.

* * * *

WELL, after the Queen bought Chris them yachts and he had sailed the ocean blue, just think of the terrible time his Ma must of put in! I'll bet she sit up nights wondering if he had remembered to take his sea-sick remedy and who would darn his socks. And I guess she was terrified for fear the Indians would scalp and tommyhawk him when he hit the American customs house.

And yet to dear old Mrs. Columbus, Chris was probably always nothing but a boy. After all, mothers have always been mothers, and in their eyes the difference between Buster Brown and Buster Columbus is principally a matter of where the belt is wore. Anyways, I could imagine how I would feel if Junior was setting out to discover America. I know I'd be worried to death for fear America would discover him first.

Whether Chris's mother attended to it or not I don't know, but the publicity he got was something wonderful. Why, the way that man was advertised I bet if he wanted it he could of been President of the U. S. A. Pretty near anybody, even today, knows he discovered Columbus, Ohio. They can tell it by the name. And Chris discovered it on a detour. He was all set for Calcutta or some place, but had to take a detour and hit the States instead.

However, Chris sure deserved his big success. The mere fact that he stuck to his ship all them months on the way over makes him a hero. Of course, he didn't have no other place to go, the walking not being so very good, but still he deserves a lot of credit just the same.

My! I can just picture old Chris on a moonlight night sitting up on deck playing solftly on his anti-pasto, or whatever the antique equivalent of the ukulele was, and singing "What'll I Do" or something, but trying to keep his spirits up, on account maybe the Italian quota wasn't filled yet and wouldn't be by the time the boat got in. All of which time his old ma at home was praying for her wandering boy.

It seems Columbus planted the first garlic tree in this country, and on account of that, why on Columbus day the Italians still turn out and hang wreaths of spaghetti on all his statues. Honest, there is so many statues of Columbus all over this country I don't see where he got the time to pose for them all, what with the busy life he led!

* * * *

WELL, we certainly owe a big debt to Christopher Columbus. Let him try and collect it! And seeing that he can't very well, why the least we can do is tell the world what we owe him. Without Christopher Columbus we wouldn't of had any Columbus Circle, N. Y., no K. of C., no Italian table d'hotes, and no holiday on Oct. 12th. And when a man had all that rating, why his mother must of been awful proud of him.

I got to pointing out some of the above facts to Geo. that's my husband, and I says say George, I says, who was Columbia? Why do they call this country Columbia when it was a he? Could Columbia of been Chris' mother d'yer think? Gee, I'll like Junior to do something that would get me called after it! And Geo. says they are quite likely to call you after something he's done that he shouldn't do.

Well anyways, just then the door bell rung and it was the Joe Bushes.

Well, we all set in the parlor and says a few conventional remarks to the effect, yes, this is Columbus day, great day for the country, isn't it, and etc. while that Joe Bush pranced all around the room slamming things open and shoving my ornaments out of place and tossing about the magazines and so forths to show how well he knew us.

Talk about our gold fish having no privacy, why a new box of sardines wouldn't have any in our house with that Joe Bush around. And finally he says, well George, he says how about a cigar, he says.

And George says ahem, haw, er, and a few other foreign expressions like that, and just about then in come Junior the little lamb, and what would he have in his dear little angel hands but George's box of cigars, and he run right up in public to his father and gave him the box, and he says hey pop he says see what I found, a perfectly good box of cigars in the waste paper basket he says. Ain't that funny pop. And then Joe Bush give Geo. a very peculiar look and Geo. give Joe Bush the tobacco.

Well, a little later when the company had gone home, George put away the three cigars he had left—put them away in a open dish in the middle of the parlor table.

Talking of what Junior will be when he grows up, says Geo., did you mention he was going to be a diplomat?

If I did, I changed my mind I says. You often do, says Geo. That's why I am so clean-minded, I says, I guess Junior is going to be a great discoverer like Christopher, after today I believe that kid could discover anything! And if he can't discover America, on account that has already been done, why he'll do something just as wonderful.

Wonderful! says Geo. So you think it's wonderful that Columbus discovered America, eh? But look at the size of the darn thing, how could he miss it?

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